

**01266**

**1974/10/22**

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

4908-X

WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

ACTION

October 22, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR:

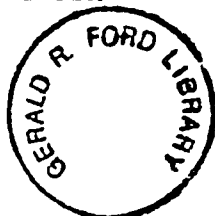
SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM:

W. R. SMYER

SUBJECT:

Getting Back to Le Duc Tho



*Message  
to the plautis*

We need to get back in touch with Le Duc Tho. We also need to decide whether to include Indochina in your talking papers for Moscow and Peking.

Le Duc Tho's latest message to you (Tab B) was singularly tough. As you may recall, I thought his tone reflected a general North Vietnamese policy decision to pursue a harder line, at least for some time, rather than any factor internal to your channel. I believe this analysis has been borne out by events, most specifically by the much tougher position that Hanoi and the PRG have taken toward Thieu. They are now refusing to deal with him. This has not worked for them in the past but they may think it is worth a try if he is weakened by a decline in U.S. aid and by domestic dissidence.

I am not sure what usefulness your channel can have in this situation. If we can only get Hanoi's cooperation by giving them Thieu (as well as a lot of money), we are in an impossible bind. We also cannot encourage a new round of direct talks between you and Le Duc Tho at this time because recent experience suggests that it will provoke land-grabbing. We are left with a holding effort in which we try to keep open the options for peace while warning Hanoi against the consequences of a tough line. This may have more impact than we may now believe possible: we are getting reports suggesting that the war effort represents a costly burden to the North, but those have not meant much in the past.

Graham Martin has seen the draft text (Tab A) and concurs (Tab C).

I think it would be worth your while to talk to the Russians and the Chinese about Indochina during your next visits. The North Vietnamese are delinquent in their ICCS contributions, which is creating great problems for us on the Hill. We might be in a stronger position if we can say that we are

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DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5  
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines  
By K6H, NARA, Date 2/6/00

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doing all we can to get their contribution. We can also express in Moscow and Peking our concern over Hanoi's refusal to deal with Thieu.

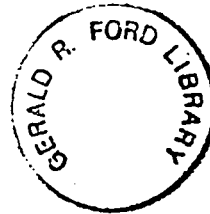
RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. That you approve the attached message to Le Duc Tho (Tab A).

Approve JK Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

B. That we prepare talking points on Indochina for your visits to Moscow and Peking.

Approve JK Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_



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MESSAGE FOR: LE DUC THO  
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER

DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5  
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines  
By K34, NARA, Date 2/10/00

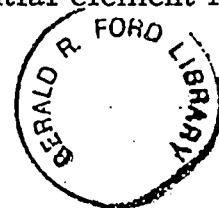
I have reviewed your message of August 25, 1974. I must tell you that I am concerned about the directions that it indicates.

As I said in my message after the accession of President Ford, the President believes that we have a choice in the roads that we may take in our relationship with each other. We can continue the course of peace that we began two years ago or we can move away from it. I believe the path of peace is still possible despite the difficulties that often appear so important.

I am sure you have seen the President's statement welcoming the release of Mr. Emmett Kay in Laos. This was a friendly gesture and we appreciate it. We hope it will herald greater cooperation in implementing Article 8, so that we can remove a major stumbling block to a productive relationship.

On the other hand, we are concerned by recent statements which indicate that your side no longer wishes to deal with President Thieu and that you contemplate a military solution. I cannot understand these because I believe -- and I thought that you believed after long experience -- that the direct contact between the parties in the South is an essential element in

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reconciliation and that no solution by force is possible. Your side must also understand that the more you attack our friends, the more we will help them. I think that it would be better for the two Southern parties to move toward resuming direct contact.

I am also concerned that I have heard nothing further from you about your side's contribution to the International Commission for Control and Supervision. Like the direct talks in the two-party commission, the ICCS is an essential element in the structure of peace that we created. I cannot believe that you do not want it to remain and, in particular, I cannot believe you would want the international responsibility for its collapse.

I would welcome a message from you on these and other subjects in the spirit in which we first approached them.

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